MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (e) The President in his address to the Nation on the eve of Republic Day this year indicated the need for mobilising additional resources for national development. He felt that raising additional resources through the budget should be supplemented by voluntary contributions from the citizens. He expressed the view that Government may constitute a National Reconstruction Fund and accept voluntary contributions for the purpose of sustaining development activities.

Annual plan outlay for Bihar

854. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Annual Plan (1991-92) for Bihar has been finalised;

(b) if so, the outlay and other broad features thereof; and

(c) the contemplated rate of industrial and agricultural growth and the targets fixed for achievement thereof in different areas of development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) and (b) Outlay for the Annual Plan (1991-92) of Bihar has been fixed at Rs. 2251 crores. Broad features of the plan are among other things emphasis on Irrigation and Flood Control, Energy, development of rural areas and human resources.

(c) Targets fixed for the agriculture sector is given in the enclosed statement. Similar information for other sectors is not available. [*See* Appendix CLVII, Annexure No. 21]

Negative returns in Cement Industry

855. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Cement industry has been registering negative returns year after year;

(b) if so, what was the net return earned by the Cement industry during 1988-89, 1980-90 and 1990-91; and

(c) what steps are contemplated by Government to make the industry viable enough to enable it to play its desired role since cement is a basic item essential for economic and social development of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) and (b) No study has been conducted by the Government about the net returns earned by the cement industry during 1988-89, 1989-90 & 1990-91. However, as per RBI reports, the post-tax returns on net-worth of cement industry was (—) 11.3 per cent during 1988-89.

(c) Proposals for increasing the installed capacity of cement are being liberally approved. Through continuous monitoring it is also ensured that infrastructural support in terms of coal, power and railway wagons is being adequately provided for maximisation of production and fuller capacity utilisation.

International seminar on cement and building materials organised by NCCBM

856. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHADRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether at the third international seminar on Cement and building materials organised by National Council for Cement and Building Materials on the 21st January, 1991, it was observed that the recent increase in cement price was disproportionate to the increase in costs of imports;

(b) if so, what steps were suggested to reduce the prices of cement; and Government's response thereto; and

(c) what steps have since been taken to bring down the cement prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) In the third International Seminar, mention was made of the rising trend of cement prices.

(b) and (c) Measures to effect cost reduction through productivity enhancement, modernisation energy conservation, automation and computer applications were discussed in the technical sessions.

It is the continuous endeavour of the Government to maximise cement production and ensure its availability to the consumers at reasonable price. Government is closely monitoring the availability of coal, wagons and other infrastructural support to the cement industry and remedial action is taken wherever necessary.

Schemes for increasing the installed capacity of cement are being liberally approved. The State Governments have been advised to keep a close watch on the dealers so that they do not indulge in profiteering at retail level.

Employment generation during the Eighth Five Year Plan

857. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether special emphasis is being laid on employment generation under the 8th Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, what strategy and programmes are contemplated for achieving that objective; and

(c) what is the rate of employment generation contemplated under the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) to (c) The Eighth Plan Approach Document envisages employment as the central thrust of the Plan. Employment opportunities are proposed to be expanded at an average rate of 3 per cent per annum during the decade 1990-2000. For this purpose, the Approach suggests that substantial shifts in the pattern investment in favour of sectors and activities using less capital and more labour per unit of output would be necessary. Details of the strategy and programmes for employment would be incorporated in the Eighth plan document

Protests by press representatives against hike in newsprint

858. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the president of the All India Small and Medium Newspapers Federation had tendered his resignation on January 24, 1991, from the Newsprint Price fixation Committee, in protest against the steep hike in newsprint prices;

(b) if so, whether the newsprint prices have been increased frequently in recent times, if so, the details of the increases affected since December 1989 till date and the reasons and justifications for such increases; and

(c) what is Government's reaction to the protests made by the press and its representatives from time to time against the hikes in newsprint prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The above mentioned Committee is for the price fixation of imported newsprint which is done on a quarterly basis. The details of the prices since 1989 are in the statement. The prices of imported newsprint are determined by international factors over which Government has no control.

(c) The Newsprint Price Fixation Advisory Committee includes representatives of Newspaper Industry also, who are free to express their views in the deliberations of the Committee meeting and their views are given due weightage.